

**News from Cam Gordon  
Council Member, Second Ward  
March 2008**

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>

**March Roundtable Reminder: University District Partnership Alliance.** We continue to make progress building the University Alliance, which includes the U of M, the City and the Cedar Riverside, Prospect Park and Southeast Como neighborhood and business groups. In February we received 28 ideas for Alliance demonstration projects, to be part of our report to the legislature in early 2009. We are currently deciding which project(s) to recommend to the Alliance Steering Committee in April. I will be holding a roundtable discussion on **Monday, March 17, 7-9pm** at **Van Cleve Park, 901 15th Ave SE** to discuss the proposals specifically and the District Partnership Alliance in general. Please join me to learn more and share your ideas, hopes and concerns.

**NRP.** I am working with my colleagues, especially Council Member Benson, to meet Legislative committee deadlines coming up in March, to get the legislature to extend the Common Project pre-1979 Tax Increment Financing districts (those that currently fund NRP) to provide funding to support a Phase 3 NRP program. I hope that we can find a compromise that will gain the support of a Council majority to support this action, which would give needed direction to our legislative delegation on NRP, and could be what is needed to extend the life of this highly successful program and also provide some much needed funds to pay debt on the downtown Basketball Arena. We are also working to gain the support of the County Board, which could be crucial to our success.

**Requiring Produce in Grocery Stores.** Last week, the Council passed an amendment to our regulations of grocery stores that included a requirement I have been fighting hard for: that all grocery stores in Minneapolis will have at least five varieties of fresh produce. This seemingly obvious regulation (which my office has heard, surprisingly, is extremely uncommon in other cities) will help increase access to fresh, healthy foods for all Minneapolitans. It will also help the City get a handle on some of the worst convenience stores in neighborhoods.

**DeLaSalle "Astroturf."** I led the successful opposition to the Park Board and DeLaSalle High School's attempt to install artificial plastic artificial turf on their proposed stadium. I was concerned about its toxicity, especially of the substrate "tire crumb" material, and did not believe it met the guidelines for historic appropriateness that the Council had to find. In the end, the Park Board withdrew their application. This field will be natural grass.

**Ranked Choice Voting Rules Ordinance.** Working with Council Member Glidden, I will also be giving notice on Friday of my intent to introduce an ordinance establishing vote counting rules and procedures for Ranked Choice Voting elections. At a meeting of the Elections Committee tomorrow, I plan to call for a Request For Proposals for election equipment and/or services that will allow Minneapolis to implement Ranked Choice Voting in 2009.

**2008 Climate Change Grants Now Available.** I invite all interested Ward 2 organizations to participate in the 2008 Climate Change Grants, which focus on motivating businesses and residents to take immediate actions to reduce their climate change impacts. There are two grant amounts available, \$1,500 or \$10,000 with no match required. Application deadline: 4:00 pm on Thursday March 20. Eligible organizations: non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, faith based organizations, business associations, schools, libraries, park/recreational centers, and other public organizations that serve Minneapolis residents and residents. For an application and more information, go to:

[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/ClimateChangeGrants\\_home.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/ClimateChangeGrants_home.asp)

**Anti-graffiti Grants Now Available.** The City is offering grants to neighborhood groups to support anti-graffiti projects. Up to \$10,000 will be made available for projects that incorporate landscaping, murals and other innovative approaches. For a grant application, go to: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/graffiti/GraffitiMicroGrants.asp>. An informational meeting will take place at 1pm, Wednesday, March 5, at the City of Lakes Building, 309 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave S, Room 203. You can also submit questions to [graffiti@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:graffiti@ci.minneapolis.mn.us), or fax them to 673-2250.

**Central Corridor.** Last week, the Central Corridor Management Committee and the Metropolitan Council made decisions about major aspects of this important project, including removing the Washington Ave tunnel. The likely outcome of this decision is that a portion of Washington will be a transit and pedestrian mall, similar to Nicollet Ave in Downtown. This will have traffic consequences on the surrounding communities. I'm pleased that the Central Corridor package that was chosen today includes more than \$20 million for mitigating adverse traffic effects that come from putting the train down Washington at grade.

**Maximum Occupancy.** On March 21, I will introduce an ordinance to change the maximum occupancy regulations in Minneapolis. My goal is threefold: 1) to make maximum occupancy regulations fairer, by treating all adults the same, regardless of their "relatedness;" 2) to address discrepancies between the zoning and housing safety codes; and 3) to tie the number of occupants in a dwelling unit to the size of the unit. My hope is to create consistent, more effectively enforceable and fairer standards that focus on maintaining healthy, safe housing for Minneapolis residents.

My current plan (which is, of course, open to change) will establish a uniform citywide cap of five legal adults per dwelling unit and stipulate that any sized unit is allowed to hold up to two adults. It will also establish occupancy limits within that range based on the square footage of individual units with each adult requiring a certain number of square feet. Basing the number on square footage will help take away the drive to carve up common space into bedrooms because such actions would not increase the occupancy of a unit. I also plan to prohibit property owners from increasing the occupancy of a unit by adding square footage. In some cases, this change will lead to an increase in occupancy of a given unit. In many cases, the occupancy limit will remain the same, and in some cases it will be reduced. I will also be adding a requirement that landlords disclose to renters the maximum occupancy of each unit and keep a form signed by tenants on file stating that tenants have received this information. The specific maximum number of adults that can live in each unit will also be clearly posted with each rental license.

After the subject is introduced it will be referred to the Public Safety and Regulatory Services and the Zoning and Planning Committees. I anticipate that it will take some months before the language is finalized and ready for a public hearing. I welcome thoughts and questions and will share more specific information as it is developed.

**Results Minneapolis.** I am very supportive and excited about the new management tool the City has developed to measure and increase the effectiveness of all our departments. It is called Results Minneapolis and helps us systematically track performance toward achieving the City's goals. As part of the program, a review panel of City leaders meets with a different department head each week to track progress and discuss strategies on key performance measures. By regularly tracking performance data we identify areas where we are excelling, as well as opportunities for improvement. I encourage you to look at specific measures for different departments and more information about this new and promising tool at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/results-oriented-minneapolis](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/results-oriented-minneapolis).

**Bridge 9 Extension.** Last month, I convinced my colleagues to make a significant investment of up to \$1.2 million in the City's bike infrastructure. As part of the new I-35W bridge, a tunnel will be constructed that will allow the City to construct an extension of the bicycle and pedestrian path over Bridge 9 into downtown. When it's finished, this trail will allow bikes and pedestrians to much better use Bridge 9 to get from Downtown to the West Bank, the U, Southeast and even

Northeast. It also promises to help make the case to the Park Board that they should be investing in Bluff Street Park. Some City staff and policymakers wanted to let this trail extension die, but I argued that it would be a major benefit to the bike infrastructure of the City. The Council supported this on an 8-3 vote. After construction, the tunnel will be secured until we find the funds to make it a safe, welcoming facility, including lighting, emergency call boxes, etc. This is slated to happen sometime between 2013 and 2020.

**BPA and Phthalates.** Last week, the Council unanimously supported a resolution I authored supporting bills in the State Legislature that would phase out Bisphenol-A and phthalates (known endocrine disruptors and suspected carcinogens used in certain plastics) in children's products. This has also gone onto the City's Legislative Agenda.

**Target Green Roof.** The Council has decided to go out for bids on constructing what could be the second largest green roof in the country, on top of the Target Center. I made the motion in committee to focus only on options that included green roof components. We will receive these bids back this fall.

**Vacant Building Registration.** The City has changed the vacant building registration fee from \$2,000 to \$6,000, to help cover our costs in dealing with vacant and boarded properties (which can be substantial) and to help encourage owners of vacant buildings to do something with them.

**Rental License Inspection Program.** The Council has passed an ordinance requiring an initial housing inspection of every rental unit that changes ownership or transitions to rental from homeownership, and charging a fee for these inspections. The conversion fee is \$1,000. This action accomplishes a number of important goals: 1) it ensures that every newly converted rental unit is up to code, protecting tenant safety; 2) it gives a financial disincentive to convert a homesteaded property to rental, helping to slow the rate of conversion.

**Street Lighting Framework.** The Council has rejected the staff proposal to add a new "lighting fee" to pay for pedestrian-level lighting. Instead, pedestrian lighting will be added to major reconstruction projects unless a majority of property owners opt out, and will continue to use an opt-in petition process for non-reconstruction lighting installations, with a clearer, more streamlined assessment process.

**2008 Neighborhood Sustainability Conference.** Please join me on Saturday, **March 8** for the "Connecting City & Citizen efforts for Sustainable Communities" conference, 8am to 4:30pm, at Augsburg College. This free conference will bring together 700 volunteer leaders from block clubs, neighborhoods, schools, congregations, garden clubs and lake associations to plan projects they want to carry out in the spring and summer to help reduce global warming and prepare for energy and climate uncertainty.

**Peace Garden.** Funding for the Seward Youth Peace Garden is in doubt. If you're interested in developing a plan for sustaining the Peace Garden through this summer so that it can get back on track in next year's grant cycle, please join me at a meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup> at 5pm, at the Seward Neighborhood Offices, 2323 E. Franklin.

**East River Parkway Hearing.** The Park Board will hold a public hearing regarding the planned trail reconstruction along East River Parkway, on **Wednesday, March 5, at 6pm at the Park Board headquarters, 2117 West River Road in the Board Room.** Plans include replacement of the pedestrian pathway south of Franklin Avenue to the south city limits, and reconstruction of both pedestrian and bike trails north of Franklin Avenue to approximately 1200 feet north of the intersection of East River Parkway and Fulton St. SE. The bike trail south of Franklin was installed in 2003.

**Environmental Remediation Grants.** The City has received environmental remediation grants, including \$156,780 for the Van Cleve Court project.

**Riverside Plaza.** The Council has approved of key terms of a settlement that will resolve part of the ongoing legal dispute among Fine Associates, Sherman Associates and Crablex, Inc, regarding access issues for Riverside Plaza and the Currie Park Flats redevelopment.

**Bina Encroachment.** March 3<sup>rd</sup>, City staff brought a proposal to the Community Development committee that the City sell the sliver of the Dania Hall site onto which Bina Partners encroached. The total that will be paid, according the terms staff will be recommended, is \$75,502. I reluctantly supported this as, because we have succeeded in negotiating a larger settlement that includes \$25,000 to be used specifically for redevelopment of the Dania site. Now that the Small Area Plan is finished, I think it may be in the best interests of the neighborhood to get some activity in the building that has been vacant for far too long and, more importantly, for the community to be able to move forward with a Dania site redevelopment without waiting for a long drawn-out legal process to wind its way through the courts.

**Openings on City Boards and Commissions.** There are openings on the Civilian Police Review Authority (closes 2/15/2008) and Zoning Board of Adjustment (closes 2/29/2008). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

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